

BALTIMORE FOOD POLICY INITIATIVE

A city committed to building an equitable and resilient urban food system



Overview

The Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI) uses food as a catalyst to address health, economic, and environmental disparities in Healthy Food Priority Areas, areas where residents face compounded challenges in accessing healthy foods. To bring multiple perspectives to food system solutions, the Department of Planning, Baltimore City Health Department, and Baltimore Development Corporation have been the key agency leads. After nine years of growth and evolution, BFPI includes three pillars:

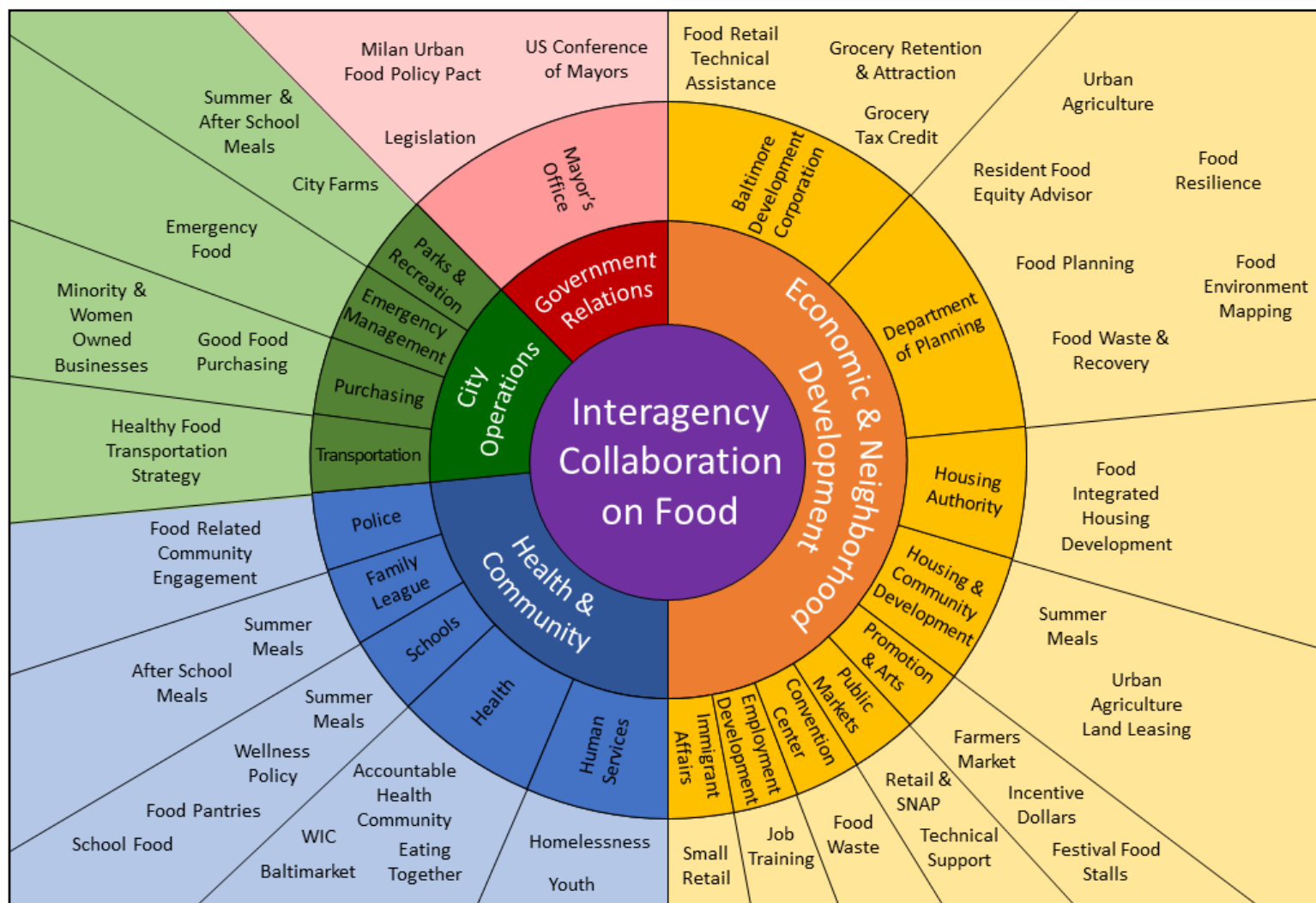
- Interagency Collaboration
- Food Policy Action Coalition
- Resident Food Equity Advisors

HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

1. Support resident-driven processes to guide equitable food policy, priorities and resources
2. Improve small grocery, corner and convenience stores
3. Retain and attract supermarkets
4. Increase the ability of the public markets to anchor the healthy food environment
5. Implement supply chain solutions that support healthy food distribution and small businesses
6. Maximize the impact of nutrition assistance and meal programs
7. Support urban agriculture, emphasizing historically disenfranchised populations and geographies
8. Address transportation gaps that impact food access

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Understanding that food does not fit solely into one government agency, the City of Baltimore takes an interagency approach to increasing access to healthy, affordable food. With each agency lending its expertise, the City creates food access strategies and implements programs and policies with multi-sector support.



FOOD POLICY ACTION COALITION

Established in 2010, Food PAC participants work actively to improve food access and the food system. Food PAC has grown to over 60 participating entities, representing nonprofits, universities, farms, businesses, hospitals, and residents. Participants are invested in issues ranging from food policy, food justice, childhood hunger, food access, nutrition, obesity, food retail, and research. Facilitated by the Food Access Planner, quarterly meetings allow participants to share updates, learn, and converse in breakout sessions so they are better equipped for their food systems work.

GOALS

- Identify and share barriers or opportunities to collectively address policy issues and implications on organizational, city, state, or federal levels.
- Build and strengthen social networks to increase knowledge and to break down silos in order to more equitably and effectively address food access and food systems

“A committed group of individuals who are passionate about food issues put together to try to tackle head on some of the food issues and problems in their neighborhood. It’s coming straight from the people of the neighborhood.”

Anthony Francis, District 9
Resident Food Equity Advisor



Resident Food Equity Advisors and Baltimore Food Policy Initiative staff work together to create resident informed policies to increase access to healthy, affordable food in Baltimore City Healthy Food Priority Areas

RESIDENT FOOD EQUITY ADVISORS

Resident Food Equity Advisors (RFEA) are cohorts of Baltimore City residents that work to collectively drive equitable food policies through an inclusive, collaborative process. Each cohort has a focused issue in need of resident input and guidance.

Selection Process:

Advisors apply and are selected based on their passion for the issue, personal experience related to the topic, ability to commit to the group, and willingness to engage in deep, continual dialogue. Advisors attend six+ meetings and receive a stipend.

Dialogue and Transparency:

Advisors participate in an intensive process to learn, share and engage. BFPI staff provide RFEAs with briefings from subject matter experts, share a government perspective, and facilitate discussions and activities to understand and gather RFEA priorities and suggestions. Conversations are open, honest, and allow the group to dive into the nuanced and multifaceted factors that impact the issue at hand.

Recommendations:

Through multiple iterations and back and forth discussion with RFEA and City staff, advisor input is translated into a set of policy recommendations, which are presented to relevant partners and elected officials to consider and incorporate into strategies and implementation plans.

Long term engagement:

After the cohort is completed, past advisors remain engaged and connected through Food PAC and can always seek out City staff for partnership and support for their work in their communities.